

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-9: CANCELED

10. (Currently Amended) A seat belt retractor comprising:  
a reel for winding a webbing;  
a locking mechanism connected to the reel by a torsion bar;  
wherein the locking mechanism is configured to be prevented from rotating in order to  
prevent the webbing from withdrawing from the reel;  
wherein one end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the reel and the other  
end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the locking mechanism;  
wherein a rib to prevent backlash is positioned in the hole in at least one of the reel  
and the locking mechanism at a location not subjected to the majority of the force applied  
between the at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism and the torsion bar when  
rotation of the locking mechanism is prevented;  
wherein the rib is located on the reel; and  
The retractor of claim 9, wherein the rib is formed by a punch contacting the reel.

11. (Currently Amended) A seat belt retractor comprising:  
a reel for winding a webbing;  
a locking mechanism connected to the reel by a torsion bar;  
wherein the locking mechanism is configured to be prevented from rotating in order to  
prevent the webbing from withdrawing from the reel;  
wherein one end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the reel and the other  
end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the locking mechanism;  
wherein a rib to prevent backlash is positioned in the hole in at least one of the reel  
and the locking mechanism at a location not subjected to the majority of the force applied  
between the at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism and the torsion bar when  
rotation of the locking mechanism is prevented;  
wherein the rib is located on the locking mechanism; and

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~~The retractor of claim 8~~, wherein the rib is formed by a punch contacting the locking mechanism.

12. (Currently Amended) A seat belt retractor comprising:  
a reel for winding a webbing;  
a locking mechanism connected to the reel by a torsion bar;  
wherein the locking mechanism is configured to be prevented from rotating in order to prevent the webbing from withdrawing from the reel;  
wherein one end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the reel and the other end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the locking mechanism;  
wherein a rib to prevent backlash is positioned in the hole in at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism at a location not subjected to the majority of the force applied between the at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism and the torsion bar when rotation of the locking mechanism is prevented; and

~~The retractor of claim 7~~, wherein the rib includes an arc-shaped cross section.

13. CANCELED

14. (Currently Amended) The retractor of claim-7 12 wherein the cross-section of the rib varies in width in the axial direction.

15. CANCELED

16. (Currently Amended) A seat belt retractor comprising:

a reel for winding a webbing;

a locking mechanism connected to the reel by a torsion bar;

wherein the locking mechanism is configured to be prevented from rotating in order to prevent the webbing from withdrawing from the reel;

wherein one end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the reel and the other end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the locking mechanism;

wherein a backlash preventing structure is positioned in the hole in at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism at a location not subjected to the majority of the force applied between the at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism and the torsion bar when rotation of the locking mechanism is prevented; and

~~The retractor of claim 15,~~ wherein the backlash preventing structure includes a tapered portion located in the locking mechanism and projecting toward the end of the torsion bar located in the hole.

17. (Currently Amended) A seat belt retractor comprising:

a reel for winding a webbing;

a locking mechanism connected to the reel by a torsion bar;

wherein the locking mechanism is configured to be prevented from rotating in order to prevent the webbing from withdrawing from the reel;

wherein one end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the reel and the other end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the locking mechanism;

wherein a backlash preventing structure is positioned in the hole in at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism at a location not subjected to the majority of the force applied between the at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism and the torsion bar when rotation of the locking mechanism is prevented; and

~~The retractor of claim 15,~~ wherein the backlash preventing structure includes a tapered portion located in the reel and projecting toward the end of the torsion bar located in the hole.

18. (New) The seat belt retractor according to claim 12 wherein the cross section of the rib includes a constant width in the axial direction.

19. (New) A seat belt retractor comprising:

a reel for winding a webbing;

a locking mechanism connected to the reel by a torsion bar;

wherein the locking mechanism is configured to be prevented from rotating in order to prevent the webbing from withdrawing from the reel;

wherein one end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the reel and the other end of the torsion bar is press fitted into a hole in the locking mechanism;

wherein a rib to prevent backlash is positioned in the hole in at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism at a location not subjected to the majority of the force applied between the at least one of the reel and the locking mechanism and the torsion bar when rotation of the locking mechanism is prevented; and

wherein the rib includes a quadrilateral cross section.

20. (New) The seat belt retractor according to claim 19, wherein the cross section of the rib includes a constant width in the axial direction.

21. (New) The seat belt retractor according to claim 19, wherein the cross section of the rib varies in width in the axial direction.

22. (New) A method of forming a seat belt retractor comprising the following steps:

providing a reel or locking mechanism with an axial hole; and

punching the reel or the locking mechanism with a punch in the proximity of a side of an inner peripheral surface of the axial hole, thereby creating a backlash preventing rib; and

inserting an end of a torsion bar into the axial hole.

23. (New) The method according to claim 22, wherein a part of the reel or the locking mechanism at a peripheral edge of the axial hole is moved toward the torsion bar by the punching.